



News Release

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Media Contact:

Mike Martin

Research Consultant

(o) 801-538-9205 (m) 801-859-8538

UDOH Releases New Data to Compare Hospital Performance

Areas of care include maternity, cardiac, orthopedic and pneumonia

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Looking for the best buy is common when shopping for the holidays, but not something most people think about when looking for medical care. To help bridge the gap for Utahns seeking hospital care, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) Health Data Committee has released four new comparison reports. The reports include Hip and Knee Surgeries and Conditions, Maternity and Newborns, Pneumonia Hospitalizations and Heart Surgeries and Conditions.

The reports compare Utah hospitals in treatment areas based on charges, quality and patient safety. Readers can make comparisons of hospital performance factors like in-hospital deaths, average charges, length-of-stay and how frequently each hospital performs the procedures.

Average hospital charge for the report measures differed widely among hospitals in 2006. For patients at the minor/moderate illness level, average hospital charges ranged from:

Utah Hospital Charges, 2006	Lowest Average Charge	Highest Average Charge	Utah Average
Normal Newborn	\$929	\$2,153	\$1,576
Cesarean Delivery	\$5,549	\$13,682	\$7,650
Hip Joint Replacement	\$20,868	\$42,872	\$28,358
Knee Joint Replacement	\$19,865	\$43,567	\$27,547
Heart Failure	\$1,020	\$15,047	\$9,989
Pneumonia	\$2,752	\$11,394	\$9,056

As noted in the reports, average hospital charge for patients treated at the major/extreme level was higher. According to Carol Masheter, Ph.D., the report's principal analyst and technical writer, "It's important to remember when comparing costs that patients who are very ill and die before they receive significant treatment and those who have "do not resuscitate" orders may have low charges. We also know that very sick patients are often transferred from smaller, rural hospitals to

larger urban hospitals.” Masheter emphasizes that average charges shown in the reports do not include physicians' professional fees or personal costs borne by the patient.

In each report, readers can also compare selected quality and safety ratings for Utah hospitals, which performed favorably when compared to their national counterparts in several report measures, including newborn injuries, injuries to mother, heart failure and pneumonia.

The vast majority of Utah hospitals (28 out of 37) at which 30 or more babies were born had fewer than expected injuries to the newborn for the years 2004 through 2006. Two hospitals (Ogden Regional and St. Mark's) had a lower percentage of deaths than expected for treating heart failure. Most Utah hospitals had about the same percentage of deaths as expected nationally for heart bypass surgery, balloon angioplasty, heart attack, hip replacement, hip fracture and pneumonia.

Most, but not all, Utah hospitals performed as well as their national counterparts in treating their maternity, orthopedic and cardiac patients. Two hospitals (Uintah Basin and Alta View) had more than the expected numbers of injuries to the mother during a delivery in 2006. From 2004-2006, two hospitals (Jordan Valley and Timpanogos Regional) had a higher percentage of deaths related to hip fracture. Davis Hospital experienced more deaths than expected for heart attack and heart failure, while Salt Lake Regional Medical Center had higher than expected deaths for heart bypass surgery. Hospitals that treated fewer than 30 patients were not included in the analysis of the quality and patient safety indicators.

The 2005 State Legislature unanimously passed Senate Bill 132 requiring the Health Data Committee to publish annual reports that compare hospitals in the areas of charges, quality and patient safety. Since passage of the Bill, the Committee has published a total of twelve hospital comparison reports. All the reports can be accessed at <http://health.utah.gov/myhealthcare>. New topics and report updates are expected for release in 2008.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.